

01518

1965/06/03

INCOMING TELEGRAM *Department of State*

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~~TOP SECRET~~

Action

CONTROL : 2934
RECD : JUNE 3, 1965, 11:35 AM

Info

FROM : SAIGON
ACTION : SECSTATE PRIORITY 4335

SECTION ONE OF TWO

~~TOP SECRET JUN 3~~

N O D I S

FOR THE UNDER SECRETARY

RE: DEPTTEL 2769

1. IN ANSWER TO YOUR QUESTIONS, WE DO NOT SEE HERE THAT THE LINE BETWEEN THE TWO POSSIBLE APPROACHES SET FORTH IN REFTTEL IS QUITE AS SHARP AS IT COMES OUT IN THAT TELEGRAM. THE AIR CAMPAIGN IN THE NORTH AND THE ANTI-VIET CONG CAMPAIGN IN THE SOUTH ARE, IN OUR THINKING, TWO PARTS OF A SINGLE COHERENT PROGRAM. THE AIR ATTACKS HAVE AS THEIR PRIMARY OBJECTIVES THE TERMINATION OF HANOI'S SUPPORT FOR THE VC WHEREAS THE CAMPAIGN IN SOUTH VIETNAM HAS AS ITS PRIMARY OBJECTIVE THE DESTRUCTION OF THE VIET CONG MILITARY APPARATUS WITHIN THE COUNTRY. IN ADDITION TO THEIR PRIMARY OBJECTIVES, EACH PROGRAM REACTS UPON THE OTHER. THUS, THE ANTI-VIET CONG EFFORT IS MADE EASIER BY ANY REDUCTION OF INFILTRATION, AND THE WILL OF HANOI IS SAPPED BY EVIDENCE OF FAILURE OF THE VIET CONG EFFORT IN THE SOUTH. VIEWED IN THIS LIGHT, THERE SHOULD BE NO QUESTION OF HOLDING BACK THE AIR STRIKES IN THE NORTH WHILE MAXIMIZING THE IN-COUNTRY CAMPAIGN AGAINST THE VIET CONG (APPROACH I) OR OF STEPPING UP THE AIR STRIKES TO COMPENSATE FOR THE DEFICIENCIES OF THE IN-COUNTRY PROGRAM (APPROACH II). RATHER, BOTH SHOULD BE MAXIMIZED CONCURRENTLY, NOT ONLY FOR THE PURPOSE OF ATTAINING THEIR PRIMARY OBJECTIVES, BUT FOR THE COLLATERAL EFFECTS IN SUPPORT OF ONE ANOTHER.

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Authority STATE letter MAR 21 1979

By isg, NARS, Date 7-19-79

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-2- 4035, June 3 (Section One of Two), From Saigon

2. IN FURTHER COMMENT ON APPROACH II, WE SHOULD LIKE TO MAKE VERY CLEAR THAT WE DO NOT BELIEVE THAT ANY FEASIBLE AMOUNT OF BOMBING OF THE NORTH IS OF ITSELF LIKELY TO CAUSE THE DRV TO CEASE AND DESIST IN ITS ACTIONS IN THE SOUTH. SUCH A CHANGE IN DRV ATTITUDES CAN PROBABLY BE BROUGHT ABOUT ONLY WHEN, ALONG WITH A SENSE OF MOUNTING PAIN FROM THE BOMBINGS, THERE IS ALSO A CONVICTION ON THEIR PART THAT THE TIDE HAS TURNED OR SOON WILL TURN AGAINST THEM IN THE SOUTH. OBVIOUSLY THESE TWO CONDITIONS HAVE NOT YET BEEN MET AND OUR JOB IN THE COMING MONTHS WILL BE TO BRING THEM ABOUT. THIS MAY TAKE A LONG TIME AND WE SHOULD NOT EXPECT QUICK RESULTS. HOLDING THIS VIEW, WE DO NOT HERE SENSE THAT OUR ACTION AGAINST THE DRV BY US-GVN FORCES HAS YET REACHED A "CRITICAL POINT" IN THE SENSE THAT WE MUST SHARPLY CHANGE THE PATTERN AND OBJECTIVES OF OUR ATTACKS AGAINST THE DRV. WE DO THINK, HOWEVER, THAT THE PATTERN SHOULD BE CONSTANTLY EVOLVING. OUR AIR ACTIONS AGAINST HANOI SHOULD ALWAYS BE ON AN ASCENDING SCALE EXPRESSED BOTH IN WEIGHT OF EFFORT AND GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION OF TARGETS. IT IS TRUE THAT THE LAST TWO ROLLING THUNDERS HAVE HAD SINGLE TARGETS PROGRESSIVELY SOMEWHAT CLOSER TO THE HANOI-HAIPHONG AREA, BUT IN GENERAL AFTER COMMENCING ROLLING THUNDER ATTACKS, WE QUICKLY REACHED A PLATEAU WHICH IS STILL BEING MAINTAINED. ALSO AS SET FORTH IN OUR EMBTEL 3753, WE FEEL THAT THE PATTERN SHOULD BE SOMEWHAT MORE RANDOM. THIS THOUGHT WAS TO SOME EXTENT INCORPORATED IN ROLLING THUNDER 16 AND WEATHER HAS ALSO CONTRIBUTED BY FORCING ON US A MORE RANDOM PATTERN. WE UNDERSTAND THAT WEATHER WILL BE AN INCREASING FACTOR IN THE COMING MONTHS.

3. IF OUR ASSUMPTIONS WITH RESPECT TO DRV REACTIONS ARE CORRECT, THERE IS NO STRATEGY THAT CAN BRING ABOUT A QUICK SOLUTION, BUT RATHER OUR STRATEGY MUST BE BASED UPON A PATIENT AND STEADY INCREASE OF PRESSURE FOLLOWING AN ESCALATING PATTERN WHILE MAKING MAXIMUM EFFORT TO TURN THE TIDE HERE IN THE SOUTH. THIS DOES NOT MEAN THAT WE MUST "WIN" IN THE SOUTH TO BRING ABOUT A CHANGE IN DRV ATTITUDES, BUT RATHER THE DRV MUST PERCEIVE THAT THE TIDE HAS TURNED OR IS LIKELY SOON TO TURN. HOPEFULLY AT THIS POINT THE DRV WILL SEEK TO FIND SOME WAY OUT, AND IF AND WHEN IT DOES, THERE COULD BE A "BANDWAGON" EFFECT THAT WOULD SO LOWER VC MORALE AND SO RAISE THAT OF SOUTH VIETNAM AS TO PERMIT BRINGING MAJOR HOSTILITIES TO A REASONABLY EARLY CONCLUSION.

4. IN EXTENSION OF THE FOREGOING OBSERVATIONS, WE WOULD ANSWER YOUR QUESTIONS AS FOLLOWS:

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-3- 4035, June 3 (Section One of Two), From Saigon

(A) QUESTION NO. 1 - WE DO NOT BELIEVE IN EMPLOYING AIR ATTACKS IN THE NORTH FOR PURPOSES PRECISELY AS EXPRESSED IN APPROACH I. IN PARTICULAR, WITH REGARD TO NO. 1-B, WE WOULD NOT TAKE AS OUR PURPOSE TO "CREATE CONCERN IN HANOI THAT THE U.S. GOVERNMENT MIGHT EXTEND ITS BOMBING SO AS GREATLY TO INCREASE THE COSTS OF TRYING TO OVERRUN SOUTH VIETNAM BY MILITARY MEANS". THIS STATEMENT SUGGESTS THAT A FEAR OF POSSIBLE CONSEQUENCES ALONE IS OUR MAIN PURPOSE, WHEREAS IT SEEMS TO US THAT THERE MUST BE ACTUAL PAIN INFLICTED BY ATTACKS AND, IN ADDITION, THE FEAR OF INCREASED PAIN IN ORDER TO HAVE MAXIMUM EFFECT IN CHANGING HANOI'S BEHAVIOR. OF COURSE, WE WOULD ALSO LIKE TO RAISE MORALE IN THE SOUTH AND LOWER MORALE IN THE NORTH, BUT THESE BENEFITS ARE COINCIDENTAL TO THE DRIVE ON THE HANOI WILL TO CONTINUE TO SUPPORT THE VIET CONG. ALSO, WE WOULD LIKE TO DO AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE IN THE HARASSMENT OF SUPPLY LINES TO REDUCE EFFECTIVE INFILTRATION, BUT WE RECOGNIZE AND ACCEPT THE IMPOSSIBILITY OF ATTAINING THIS OBJECTIVE EXCEPT TO A LIMITED DEGREE.

TAYLOR

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INCOMING TELEGRAM *Department of State*

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RECD : JUNE 3, 1965, 11:37 AM

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SECTION TWO OF TWO

~~TOP SECRET~~ JUN 3

N O D I S

FOR THE UNDER SECRETARY

RE: DEPTTEL 2769

(B) QUESTION NO. 2 - WE DO NOT BELIEVE THAT WE SHOULD RE-SHAPE OUR AIR EFFORT WITH THE IDEA THAT INCREASED BOMBING WILL COMPENSATE FOR LOSSES ON THE MILITARY AND POLITICAL FRONTS IN THE SOUTH. ON THE OTHER HAND, WE WOULD NOT CEASE TO APPLY THE KIND OF MOUNTING PRESSURE DESCRIBED IN PARAGRAPH 2 ABOVE. WHILE WE SHOULD DO EVERYTHING POSSIBLE TO WIN ON BOTH FRONTS, NORTH AND SOUTH, WE SHOULD NOT LET UP IN THE NORTH BECAUSE THINGS ARE NOT GOING WELL IN THE SOUTH.

(C) QUESTION NO. 6S* - AS WE HAVE INDICATED ABOVE, THE CHANCE OF PERSUADING HANOI TO LAY OFF WHILE THE VIET CONG ARE WINNING OR HOLDING THEIR OWN IN THE SOUTH IS OBVIOUSLY NOT GOOD. HOWEVER, WE REPEAT THAT THIS FACT IS NO REASON TO LIMIT THE BOMBING EFFORT IN THE NORTH. IT SIMPLY MEANS THAT WE MUST TRY HARDER IN THE SOUTH WHILE BEARING DOWN ON THE NORTH. IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO SAY WHETHER ADDED PRESSURE WOULD CREATE UNACCEPTABLE RISKS OF AN ENLARGED SOVIET-CHINESE INVOLVEMENT EXCEPT IN TERMS OF SPECIFIC TARGETS. OBVIOUSLY, ANY EXTENSION OF THE PRESENT TARGET SYSTEM SHOULD BE EXAMINED CLOSELY FOR THIS POINT OF VIEW.

(D) QUESTION NO. 4 - IN CONSIDERATION OF OUR VIEWS EXPRESSED ABOVE, WE HAVE RECOMMENDED THE APPROVAL OF ROLLING THUNDER 17 (EMBTEL 4024).

5. WITH RESPECT TO THE METHOD OF CARRYING OUT AUTHORIZED STIKES, THE PRESENT PATTERN IS GENERALLY SATISFACTORY TO US. WE NEED APPROXIMATELY 48 HOURS, FROM RECEIPT OF THE EXECUTION ORDER TO BOMBS ON TARGET, FOR ME TO CLEAR WITH THE PRIME MINISTER AND GENERAL WESTMORELAND WITH THE MINISTER OF DEFENSE AND COMMANDER-

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IN-CHIEF OF THE RVNAF. A TWO-WEEK PROGRAM IS PREFERABLE TO A ONE-WEEK PROGRAM. DESIRABLY, OPERATING UNITS SHOULD RECEIVE THE WARNING ORDER ONE WEEK PRIOR TO EXECUTION IN ORDER TO PERMIT ADEQUATE PLANNING. A TWO-WEEK PROGRAM WITH EXECUTION DELEGATED TO THE OPERATION LEVEL WOULD PROVIDE FLEXIBILITY IN COPING WITH THE VAGARIES OF THE WEATHER AND OTHER FACTORS, INCLUDING IN-COUNTRY COMPETITION FOR SORTIES. WHETHER STRIKES ARE MADE DAILY OR INTERMITTENTLY WOULD NOT SEEM TO BE SIGNIFICANT, BUT EXPERIENCE SUGGESTS THAT MORE FREQUENT STRIKES BY FEWER AIRCRAFT REDUCES LOGISTICS. ADDITIONALLY, VARIED AND REPEATED STRIKES SERVE TO COMPLICATE THE PROBLEM FOR THE DRV DEFENSES.

6. IN ADDITION TO ANSWERING YOUR QUESTIONS, WE WOULD LIKE TO MAKE SOME SPECIFIC COMMENTS ON TARGETING. DERIVED FROM THE THREE COURSES OF ACTION DISCUSSED IN REFTEL. AS WE UNDERTAKE THESE THREE COURSES OF ACTION, THE FIRST INVOLVES A PROGRESSIVE MOVEMENT NORTHWARD WITHOUT CONSIDERATION FOR THE SENSITIVITY OF THE HANOI/HAIPHONG AREA; THE SECOND MOVE NORTHWARD BUT SIDESLIPS TO THE WEST, AND PERHAPS TO THE EAST, TO AVOID THE SAM'S; AND THE THIRD CONFINES OUR EFFORTS SOUTH OF THE 20TH PARALLEL BUT INCLUDES INDUSTRIAL OR NON-MILITARY TARGETS.

7. IN CONSONANCE WITH THE CONCEPT EARLIER EXPRESSED, IT IS IMPORTANT THAT WE CONSTANTLY ADD TO THE PRESSURE OF THE DRV. IF WE CONTINUE TO CONCENTRATE ON LINES OF COMMUNICATIONS AS IN THE PAST, THE VERY REPETITION OF OUR ACTIONS DESIGNED TO DISRUPT AND MAINTAIN THE DISRUPTION OF THESE COMMUNICATIONS IS IN ITSELF A FORM OF ESCALATION. IN ADDITION, WHILE MAINTAINING THIS INTERDICTION PROGRAM, WE WOULD LIKE TO INTRODUCE VARIETY BY OCCASIONALLY STRIKING A TARGET ON A RANDOM BASIS OUTSIDE OF THE LOONC PATTERN, SUCH AS A POWER PLANT, MILITARY INSTALLATION, DAM SITE, SUPPLY AREA, INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX, DAM SITE, BY SO DOING, WE COMPLICATE THE DRV DEFENSE PROBLEM AND MAKE IT CLEAR THAT WE ARE LIMITED TO NO SINGLE TARGET PLAN. THUS, NOTHING OTHER THAN POPULATED AREAS IS IMMUNE TO ATTACK.

8. UNDER THIS CONCEPT, WE WOULD AVOID THE SENSITIVE AREA OF HANOI/HAIPHONG EXCEPT FOR AN OCCASIONAL WELL SELECTED TARGET WITHIN THE AREA STRUCK TO SHOW THAT WE CAN PENETRATE AND THAT THERE IS NO SURE CANCTUARY. WE DO NOT FEEL THAT AN OCCASIONAL SELECTIVE INTRUSION INTO THIS AREA IS LIKELY TO INVOKE A CHINESE REACTION EVEN THOUGH WE TANGLE WITH MIG'S.

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9. THE NUMBER OF INDUSTRIAL AND OTHER SIGNIFICANT NON-MILITARY TARGETS BELOW THE 20TH PARALLEL ARE FEW AND FAR BETWEEN. IN FACT THERE ARE VERY FEW SUCH TARGETS OUTSIDE OF THE HANOI/HAIPHONG COMPLEX. WE AGREE THAT NON-MILITARY TARGETS SHOULD BE STRUCK AS A VARIATION FROM THE LOC PATTERN, BUT ONLY OCCASIONALLY AND SELECTIVELY, BOTH NORTH AND SOUTH OF THE 20TH PARALLEL.

10. IN SUMMARY WE RECOMMEND A BASIC PATTERN OF LOC TARGETS VARIED OCCASIONALLY BY OTHER KINDS OF TARGETS BOTH SOUTH AND NORTH OF THE 20TH PARALLEL TO INCLUDE THE HANOI/HAIPHONG AREA. UPON THIS PATTERN, WE WOULD SUPERIMPOSE A PROGRAM OF FULL FLEDGED PSYWAR OPERATIONS AS AN INTEGRAL PART OF ROLLING THUNDER. THIS WOULD REQUIRE ONLY A SLIGHT INCREASE IN AIR EFFORT. LEAFLET DROPS SHOULD PRECEDE AND SOMETIMES ACCOMPANY STRIKES, HAVING THE PRIMARY PURPOSE OF EXPLAINING THE CAUSE AND NATURE OF ROLLING THUNDER AND OF MAGNIFYING POPULAR ANXIETY.

11. WE APPRECIATE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO PRESENT OUR VIEWS ON THESE IMPORTANT SUBJECTS.

TAYLOR

* AS RECEIVED. WILL BE SERVICED ON REQUEST.

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